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SPEAKING AS THE LEADING ASPECT IN TEACHING ENGLISH

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***Abstract.** Since language is a means of communication, teaching speaking is a prior task in any methodology. This article is devoted to the research of the main methods of teaching speaking. These methods are fully described and their importance and productivity are proved.*

***Key words:** foreign language, speaking activities, speaking skills, teaching speaking, communication.*

ГОВОРІННЯ ЯК ПРІОРИТЕТНИЙ АСПЕКТ У ВИКЛАДАННІ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

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***Анотація.** Since language is a means of communication, teaching speaking is a prior task in any methodology. This article is devoted to the research of the main methods of teaching speaking. These methods are fully described and their importance and productivity are proved.*

***Ключові слова:** іноземна мова, розмовна діяльність, навички говоріння, навчання говорінню, розмова.*

English is the most commonly used language of international business, science and technology. It is often referred to as the modern lingua franca, a language that is used for communication by people who do not share the same mother tongue. As such it is the language most often taught around the world as a second foreign language, and the problems of teaching speaking skills is the subject of this article.

There is no single, «correct» way to teach English as a foreign language, but there are many generally accepted methods and precepts. One of these is speaking only English with your students rather than their mother tongue. Sometimes the

use of the native language may be useful, to give a quick translation for example, especially for students at lower levels. However, it is best to be avoided on a regular basis and students themselves will expect you, as the teacher, to give your lesson in English. It is also important to encourage students to speak amongst themselves in English.

Speaking and Writing skills are both productive skills but do not have the same similarities when teaching. Broadly speaking, writing is more formal. It requires more accuracy, with the emphasis on spelling and punctuation. Speaking is about immediate communication, where mistakes and slips of the tongue occur naturally.

Accuracy is important, but fluency is key: the ability to talk fairly freely, without stopping or hesitating too much.

Setting up a speaking activity needs careful planning and much will depend on the class size. Ideally, you need to step back from the group and discreetly monitor and encourage the students.

To get a good discussion going the teacher should observe the following rules:

1. Frame the discussion well.

Don't just jump in the deep end («Here is the topic, now TALK»). It usually helps to find ways to lead in at the beginning and ways to close at the end. A lead-in may be no more than a brief focus on a picture; it could be a text that everyone reads and which naturally flows into the topic. It could be a personal recollection from you.

2. Pay attention to the preparation time.

Your students may need some time before the speaking activity, not to write out speeches (this is to be a speaking activity, not a reading aloud one), but perhaps to look up vocabulary in their dictionaries, think through their thoughts, make a note.

3. Don't interrupt the students.

You shouldn't correct the students while they are in full flow and leave correction for when the activity has finished.

Speaking activities need to be properly planned. Be aware of the size of your group and how this might affect your classroom management.

Speaking activities often fit naturally into the structure of a lesson, as a follow-up activity to a Reading task, for example. You might occasionally have a lesson that is exclusively Speaking, but that is harder to sustain.

During a Speaking activity you should observe and monitor, and give gentle encouragement where necessary. The key is not to join in and not to correct during the activity.

Always allow time after the activity for feedback and for some correction.

4. Specific problems are more productive than general issues.

Rather than giving the students a general topic to discuss, try setting a specific, related problem. This is often more challenging, more interesting and more realistic.

5. Use Role Play and role cards.

One other way of getting students to speak is role-playing. Students pretend they are in various social contexts and have a variety of social roles. In role-play activities, the teacher gives information to the learners such as who they are and what they think or feel. Thus, the teacher can tell the student that "You are David, you go to the doctor and tell him what happened last night, and..."

Giving students brief role cards sometimes help because it can often be easier to speak in someone else's character than in your own.

6. Form buzz groups.

If a whole-class discussion seems to be dying on its feet, try splitting the class up into «buzz groups», quickly divide the class into small setsof four or five students. Ask them to summarise the discussion so far, particularly considering if they agree with what different people have said. After a few minutes (with students

still in groups), ask them to think of three comments or questions that would be interesting to share with the whole class. Then bring the whole class back together and continue the discussion. The entire buzz-group stage may take only about three or four minutes, but can help inject a lot more energy into a discussion.

Don't feel that you can never bend the above rules. Sometimes it may make sense to go straight into the discussion. Perhaps because you want the students to get some practice at unprepared speaking, or because the subject is burning so strongly that it just demands to be started immediately.

Teaching speaking is a very important part of second language learning. The ability to communicate in a second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in every phase of life. Therefore, it is essential that language teachers pay great attention to teaching speaking. Rather than leading students to pure memorization, providing a rich environment where meaningful communication takes place is desired. With this aim, various speaking activities such as those listed above can contribute a great deal to students in developing basic interactive skills necessary for life. These activities make students more active in the learning process and at the same time make their learning more meaningful and fun for them.

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